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# Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-01-310](#), a report to Senate and House Committees on Armed Services and Subcommittees on Defense, Senate and House Committees on Appropriations

## Why GAO Did This Study

In view of past increases in the estimated cost of the F-22 program, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 limited the cost of F-22 development to \$20.4 billion. The act also required GAO to annually assess the development program to determine whether it is meeting its schedule, cost, and performance goals. In addition, GAO assessed the Air Force's plans for initial low-rate production.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Air Force

- provide the Congress with information on the implications of schedule delays and
- limit low-rate initial production of the F-22 to 10 per year until operational testing is complete.

DOD agreed that it would advise the Congress if major changes to the flight-testing program are approved. DOD, however, did not concur with limiting production, pending completion of a defense program review directed by the President

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-01-310](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-01-310).

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Allen Li (202) 512-3600 or [lia@gao.gov](mailto:lia@gao.gov).

## TACTICAL AIRCRAFT

# F-22 Development and Testing Delays Indicate Need for Limit on Low-Rate Production

## What GAO Found

The F-22 development program made progress but did not meet schedule goals for flight testing planned for 2000. Flight-testing goals were not met because of problems and delays with the assembly and delivery of aircraft for testing and lower-than-planned efficiency in the flight-testing program. The Air Force acknowledges a potential 4- to 6-month delay in completing the flight-testing program.

It appears unlikely that the F-22 development program can be completed as scheduled within the \$20.4 billion cost limitation. Potential growth in contractor work and extension of the flight-testing program could generate additional costs. The Air Force maintains it is prioritizing work to allow completion of development within the cost limitation; however, that could mean some test activities could be delayed or dropped. The Air Force continues to estimate that by the time the development program ends, the F-22 will meet or exceed its performance goals. However, testing to demonstrate performance is not far enough along to enable the Air Force to confirm its estimates.

The Air Force planned to initiate low-rate production of the F-22s, beginning with 10 in fiscal year 2000 and increasing to 16 in 2002 and 24 in 2003 before completing its operational testing and evaluation of the aircraft's effectiveness. Under this approach, the Air Force increases the risk of buying systems that require significant and costly modifications or deploying substandard systems to combat forces.



The F-22 incorporates stealth and other new technologies designed to permit it to penetrate adversary airspace, operate with limited interference, and destroy targets in the air as well as on the ground. (Source: U.S. Air Force)